

Paper 157 – Poster

The Digital Orchard Project: Cultivating Innovation, Gathering Creativity

Ricardo Torres
Rafael Martín
Artur Serra
Alba Ortíz

rtorres@citilab.eu
rafael.martin@citilab.eu
artur.serra@i2cat.net
aortiz@citilab.eu

Citilab, Spain

Abstract

The Digital Orchard (Hort Digital, in Catalan) is a project developed at Citilab-Cornellà (<http://en.citilab.eu>), whose objective is to help high school teachers use technology in innovative ways in the classroom. It has been conceived as a Living Lab for education, focused on secondary education, and it is now in the process of being expanded to primary education. In this space, teachers and facilitators work together to propose, discuss and test innovative approaches to using technology in the classroom, with a focus on Web 2.0 tools and personalisation of learning. The main driver behind the project is to help closing the digital gap between teachers and students, help teachers realise the potential of new technologies, and support the new policies being issued by both the regional and national governments in Spain.

During the academic year 2009-2010 the participants developed a total of 28 projects (as many as participants): amongst them, social networks (based on Ning) to allow teachers and students to share files (documents, videos, pictures, music) through the social network, and comment on them and start discussions on the forum; Wikis for collaborative creation of content for the subjects; student-created videos for demonstrating physics and chemistry experiments, shared through a Youtube group; and dossiers based on Google Docs, through which the teacher can provide feedback and suggestions. All these projects show how the teachers implemented new technologies in the classroom, using them to support the curriculum, foster participation and creativity in their students, and help them engage students in the analysis and creation of content. In the end, we think that what is important is not to use technology just for technology's sake, but to be able to identify opportunities and challenges, and make the best use of the tools teachers have at their hands, whether they are digital or not.